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42

SUPERMAN

IN ACTION COMICS

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

BY ROGER STERN,
BOB MCLEOD &
DENIS RODIER



ALL THIS AND
LEX LUTHOR II!

MANNHEIM'S ON
THE LOOSE!
HAPPY THANKSGIVING,
METROPOLIS!

SUPERMAN



Created by
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

THE ENTIRE
WAREHOUSE
DISTRICT IS
GOING UP IN
FLAMES!

LOOKS
LIKE I GOT
BACK TO
METROPOLIS
NOT A MOMENT
TOO SOON!

HOLY
SMOKES...
LOOK!

ALL THIS...AND LEX LUTHOR II!



THANK GOD, I ARRIVED IN TIME -- EVEN OVER ALL THE NOISE, I KNOW I HEARD VOICES IN HERE!

FOAM MODULE WORKING AS PER SPEC. THE FIRE IN THIS SECTION SHOULD BE EXTINGUISHED IN APPROXIMATELY SIX MINUTES.

NO NEED TO WORRY, CITIZEN. WE'VE APPREHENDED THE FELON WHO STARTED THE FIRES...

...TEAM LUTHOR HAS EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL!

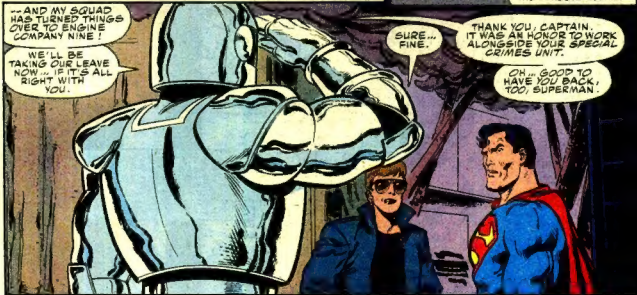
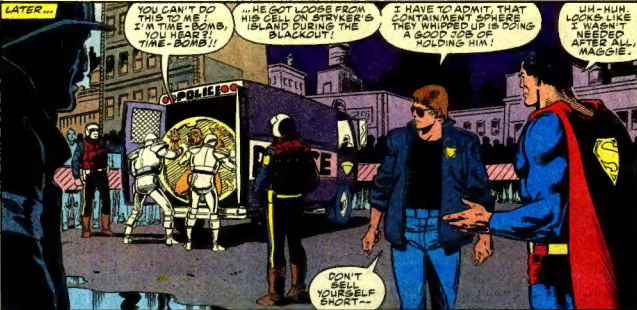
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! YOU CAN'T PROVE ANYTHING! LET ME OUT OF THIS THING!!

YES, THERE THEY ARE!

NO NORMAL FIREFIGHTERS COULD HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY THROUGH ALL THIS SMOKE, BUT FORTUNATELY, I...

WHAT THE DEVIL--?!

ROGER STERN - WRITER
BOB MCLEOD - PENCILLER
DENIS RODIER - INKER
BILL OAKLEY - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
DAN THORSLAND - ASSISTANT
MIKE CARLIN - FIRE CHIEF





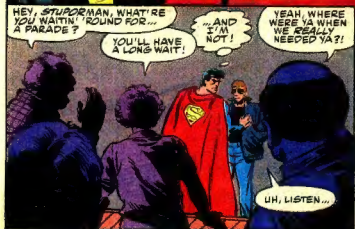
YAY! TEAM LUTHOR!

GOD BLESS YA ALL!

YEAH, YOU AN' YER BOSS!

THANK THE LORD THERE'S A LUTHOR BACK IN BUSINESS!

THEY'RE CLEARLY THE STARS OF THE HOUR, MAGGIE...



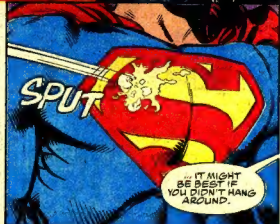
HEY, STUPORMAN, WHAT'RE YOU WAITIN' 'ROUND FOR...

YOU'LL HAVE A LONG WAIT!

...AND I'M NOT!

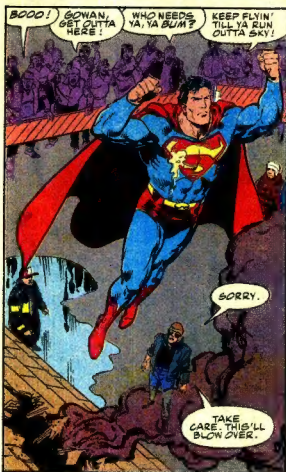
YEAH, WHERE WERE YA WHEN WE REALLY NEEDED YA?!

UH, LISTEN...



SPUT

...IT MIGHT BE BEST IF YOU DIDN'T HANG AROUND.



BOOO! GOWAN, GET OUTTA HERE!

WHO NEEDS YA, YA BUM?

KEEP FLYIN' TILLYA RUN OUTTA SKY!

SORRY.

TAKE CARE, THIS'LL BLOW OVER.



I HOPE SO, MAGGIE... I TRULY HOPE SO.

BIG HERO...BIG DEAL!

BE COOL MAN... AT LEAST THE POWER'S BACK ON!

YEAH, BUT NO THANKS TO HIM! GOD KNOWS WHAT WOULD'A HAPPENED TO THIS CITY...



* IF LUTHOR'S KID HADN'T SHOWED UP TO PUT THINGS RIGHT!

HERE, NOW! I DIDN'T ASK YOU GENTS TOGETHER JUST TO HEAR YOU GRIZZLE AN' MOAN...



NOT WHEN THIS CITY'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER IS HANGING OUT OVER THE EDGE! THE DAILY PLANET IS KNOWN THE WORLD 'ROUND -- 'STRENGTH, I'VE SEEN COPIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL EDITION IN THE OUTBACK!

I'D HATE TO SEE IT ALL COME A CROPPER.

SEEMS TO ME THAT LABOR AND MANAGEMENT HAVE BOTH BEEN SCREAMING AT EACH OTHER. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE APPROACH THIS IN A MORE REASONABLE MANNER?



REASONABLE?! LUTHOR, IF WE SUBMITTED TO MANAGEMENT'S DEMANDS, HALF OF OUR PEOPLE WOULD FALL BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL!

IT'S AN OUTRAGE! WE CANNOT ACCEPT SUCH CUTS!



FRIEDMAN, THE PAPER CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT PAY AND BENEFIT CUTS. WE FACE A LOSS AS IT IS.

YOU KNOW HOW AD REVENUES HAVE FALLEN.



HOLD ON. I SEE A WAY OUT.



MR. LING, IF THE PLANET'S AD REVENUES ROSE TO... OH, SAY THE LEVEL THEY WERE TWO YEARS AGO, COULDN'T YOU FOREGO THE CUTS?

NO PROBLEM! AT THOSE LEVELS, WE COULD EVEN AFFORD MODEST HIKES!

THEN YOU'LL HAVE THOSE REVENUES... AS MAJORITY STOCKHOLDER OF THE LEXCORP GROUP, I GUARANTEE IT!



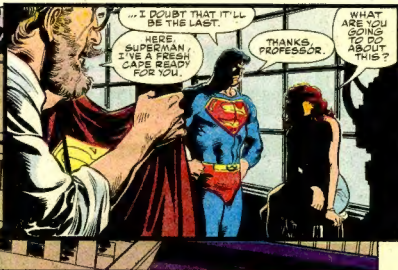
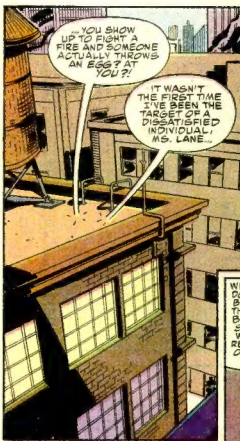
FANTASTIC!

THE PERFECT SOLUTION!

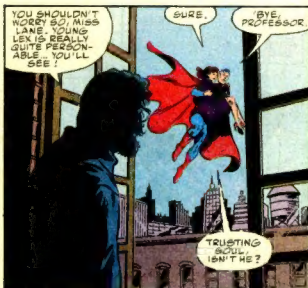
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE REACTION ON THE PICKET LINE WHEN WE STROLL OUT ARM-IN-ARM!

NEITHER CAN I JEB! IT'LL DO EVERYONE A WORLD OF GOOD TO SEE US BURY THE HATCHET!





* IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN # 485.



"I KNOW WHERE HE LIVES!
I WISH WE DIDN'T HAVE TO
CARRY ON THIS CHARGE,
ESPECIALLY FOR DEAR SOULS
LIKE SMIL HAMILTON--"

"HE'S PROBABLY
ALREADY
TURNED
AROUND
AND
HEADED
BACK
TO
THIS
BUILDING..."

"...FASTER
THAN
THE
EYE
CAN
FOLLOW."

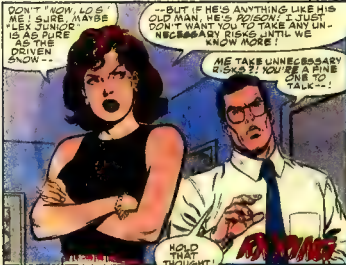
"AS FAST AS HE IS, HE'LL
CERTAINLY GET TO HIS
THIRD-FLOOR APARTMENT--"

"--BEFORE
I CAN!"

"--BUT NEITHER
OF US WOULD HAVE
A SECOND'S PEACE
IF THE WORLD
KNEW THAT MY FIANCE'
IS REALLY
SUPERMAN!"

NOK
NOK
JUST A MOMENT!

HI, HON!
'AFTERNOON, CLARK.
CARE TO CON-
TINUE OUR LITTLE
DISCUSSION?
NOW, LOIS--!



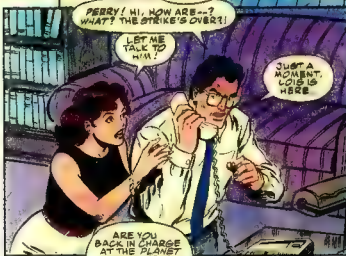
DON'T "NOW, LOS" ME! SURE, MAYBE "LEX JUNIOR" IS AS PURE AS THE DRIVEN SNOW--

--BUT IF HE'S ANYTHING LIKE HIS OLD MAN, HE'S POISON! I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO TAKE ANY UNNECESSARY RISKS UNTIL WE KNOW MORE!

ME TAKE UNNECESSARY RISKS? YOU'RE A FINE ONE TO TALK--!

HOLD THAT THOUGHT!

KNOCK



PERRY! HI, HOW ARE--? WHAT? THE STRIKE'S OVER?!

LET ME TALK TO HIM!

JUST A MOMENT, LOIS IS HERE

ARE YOU BACK IN CHARGE AT THE PLANET CHIEF--OR IS FOSWELL STILL PLAYING EDITOR?



THAT IS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION--



--BUT IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE A PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT FOR BOTH OF YOU...



GENTLEMEN...

"I WANT YOU TO FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT LEX LUTHOR THE SECOND!"

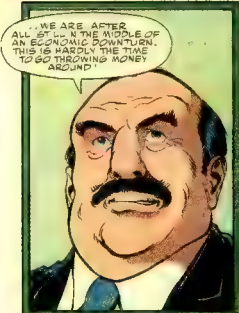


"METROPOLIS HAS BEEN SOME HARD TIMES, BUT WE HAVE IT WITHIN OUR POWER TO TURN THINGS AROUND. WE CAN MAKE THIS CITY BLOOM AGAIN."

"I'VE ALREADY AUTHORIZED THE LUTHOR FOUNDATION TO DISBURSE A LOT TO SMALL BUSINESSMEN WHO WERE HIT BY LOOTING--"

--BUT WE HAVE TO DO MORE THAN THAT! METROPOLIS NEEDS JOBS, AND WE MUST FILL THAT NEED!"

NOW LET'S NOT GET CARRIED AWAY LEX.



"...WE ARE AFTER ALL STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN. THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME TO GO THROWING MONEY AROUND."



"I DON'T INTEND TO THROW MONEY ANYWHERE MARKHAM. I INTEND TO INVEST IT IN THE CITY'S FUTURE! LEXCORP HAS CAPITAL WE HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED!"

LEX, YOU'RE AN ACTIVE YOUNG MAN-- AND THAT'S GOOD-- BUT THERE'S A TIME FOR CAUTION--"

CAUTION?! IF MY FATHER HAD BEEN CAUTIOUS, THERE NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN A LEXCORP! WHEN HE WAS MY AGE--!"

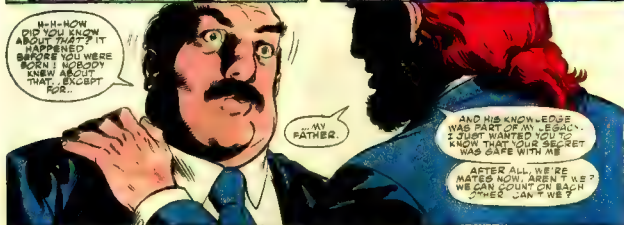


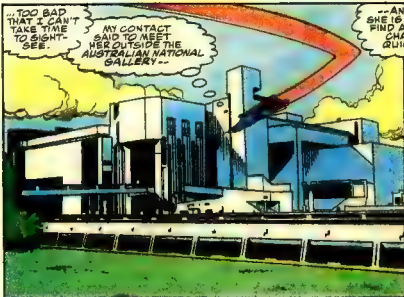
"WHEN HE WAS YOUR AGE, TIMES WERE DIFFERENT. YOU MAY HAVE INHERITED YOUR FATHER'S HOLDINGS, BUT AS FAR AS BUSINESS IS CONCERNED, YOU'RE STILL WAY BEHIND THE EARS!"

"I CAME UP THROUGH THE RANKS WITH YOUR FATHER... AND YOU, YOUNG MAN, ARE NOT YOUR FATHER!"

WELL, I CAN DISPUTE THAT, NOW CAN I?"

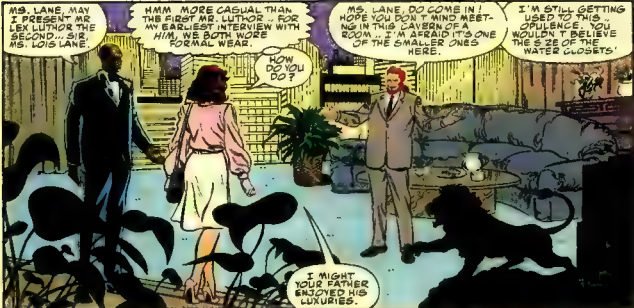
IT'S GETTING LATE GENTS. WHAT SAY WE ADJOURN FOR DINNER AND TAKE THIS UPON THE MORROW?"

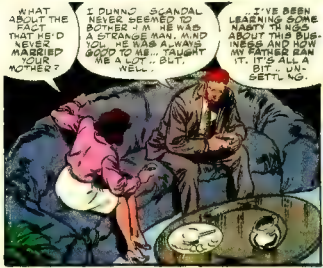
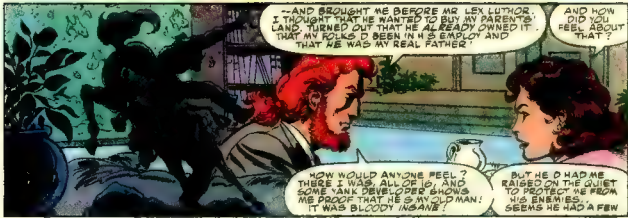




* AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION.







LEX LUTHOR WAS ONE OF THE SLIMEST, LEST CREATURES EVER TO WALK UPRIGHT!

MS. LANE! YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT!

"OH YES I CAN... ONE OF HIS SCHEMES LEFT A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE A PARAPLEGIC! AND WHEN ONE OF LUTHOR'S RESEARCH LABS RESTORED HIS ABILITY TO WALK--

"--IT WAS JUST PART OF A PLAN TO TURN HIM INTO AN ARMORED HIT MAN!

"UNDERSTAND... TO MOST PEOPLE IN METROPOLIS, LUTHOR WAS THE EMPLOYER... BUT WHAT HE REALLY WANTED WAS TO BE THEIR LORD AND MASTER!

"SOME SAW THAT, BUT FEW HAD THE GUTS TO STAND UP TO HIM

"ONE PERSON WHO'D WAS SUPERMAN. ONCE HE ARRIVED, LUTHOR WAS NO LONGER THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN METROPOLIS.

"NATURALLY LUTHOR COULDN'T STAND FOR THAT! AGAIN AND AGAIN, HE TRIED TO HAVE SUPERMAN KILLED!

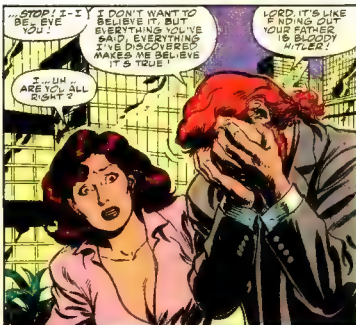
"KILLED?!" MS. LANE

"YES, AND EACH TIME SUPERMAN WON OUT! BUT EACH TIME, LUTHOR HAD SOME SORT OF ALIBI. EACH TIME HE ESCAPED BEING BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, AND MOST PEOPLE DON'T EVEN SUSPECT WHAT A... A MONSTER HE WAS!"

THAT'S THE REAL TRAGEDY... PEOPLE HAVE ALL BUT ERECTED SHRINES TO YOUR FATHER, AND HE WOULD HAVE BOUGHT AND SOLD THOSE PEOPLE WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT!

HE WOULD USE ANYONE AND EVERYONE TO GET WHAT HE WANTED... AND HE'D STOP AT NOTHING! WHY MY OWN MOTHER WAS--

MS. LANE, PLEASE



"STOP! I-I BELIEVE YOU!"

"I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT, BUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE SAID, EVERYTHING I'VE DISCOVERED MAKES ME BELIEVE IT'S TRUE!"

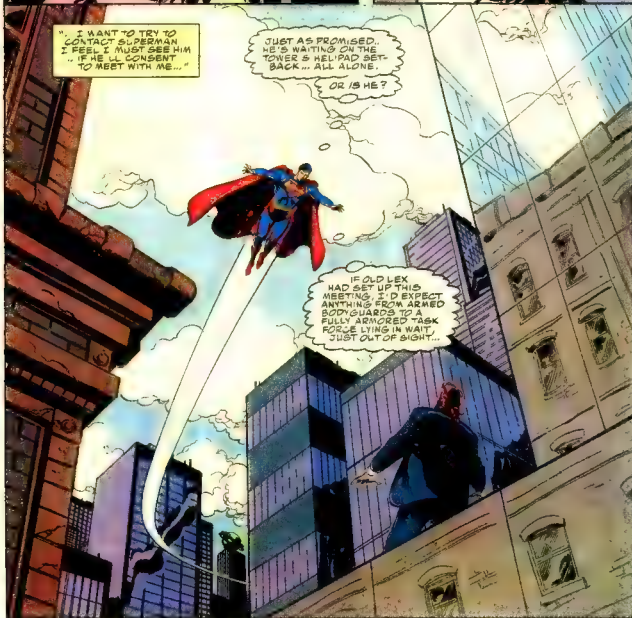
"I-UM ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?"

"LORD, IT'S LIKE FINDING OUT YOUR FATHER IS BLOODY HITLER!"



"MS. LANE, I KNOW I HAVE NO RIGHT TO ASK THIS... IN FACT, AFTER WHAT YOU'VE JUST TOLD ME..."

"...I WOULDN'T BLAME YOU FOR YOUR SPOT IN MY FACE... BUT IF YOU COULD FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO HELP ME..."



"...I WANT TO TRY TO CONTACT SUPERMAN. I FEEL I MUST SEE HIM... IF HE'LL CONSENT TO MEET WITH ME..."

"JUST AS PROMISED... HE'S WAITING ON THE TOWER'S HELIPAD SET-BACK... ALL ALONE."

"OR IS HE?"

"IF OLD LEX HAD SET UP THIS MEETING, I'D EXPECT ANYTHING FROM ARMED BODYGUARDS TO A FULLY ARMORED TASK FORCE LYING IN WAIT, JUST OUT OF SIGHT..."





... AND CAME ACROSS THIS BURIED IN THE RUINS OF AN OLD FARM HOUSE.

GOOD LORD... THE FAMILY PORTRAIT!



THIS WAS TAKEN... BARELY A YEAR... 'FORE THE FIRE.



I'D THOUGHT IT LOST FORE'ER.

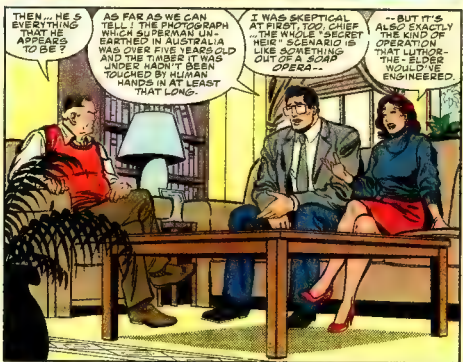
GOD BLESS YOU, SUPERMAN! GOD BLESS YOU! I CAN NEVER REPAY YOU FOR THIS... NEVER.



... AND THAT'S THE STORY, PERRY. WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO UNCOVER ANYTHING THAT CONTRADICTS THE FACE YOUNG LEX HAS SHOWN TO THE PUBLIC.



YES, BUT THIS TIME, HE MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE. THE COUPLE HE PICKED TO RAISE HIS SON DID TOO GOOD A JOB. LEX TAKES AFTER THEM.



THEN... HE'S EVERYTHING THAT HE APPEARS TO BE?

AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL! THE PHOTOGRAPH WHICH SUPERMAN UN-EARTHED IN AUSTRALIA WAS OVER FIVE YEARS OLD AND THE TIMBER IT WAS UNDER HADN'T BEEN TOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS IN AT LEAST THAT LONG.

I WAS SKEPTICAL AT FIRST, TOO, CHIEF... THE WHOLE "SECRET HERE" SCENARIO IS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A SOAP OPERA--

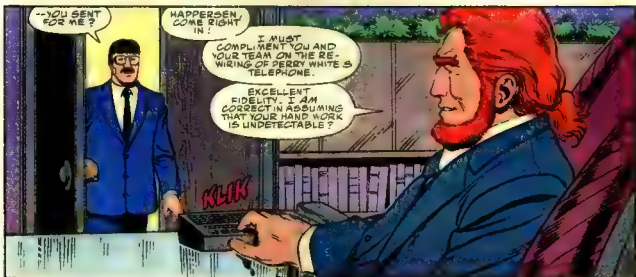
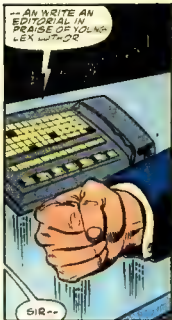
-- BUT IT'S ALSO EXACTLY THE KIND OF OPERATION THAT LUTHOR-- THE ELDER-- WOULD'VE ENGINEERED.

...NOT AFTER LUTHOR-- HE SEEMS GENUINELY APPALLED BY WHAT HIS FATHER DID... EVEN SUPERMAN'S CONVINCED OF THAT!



AMPH... I SHOULD FIND THAT REASSURING, BUT PART OF ME STILL WISHES THAT YOU'D FOUND SOME DIRT ON THE LITTLE SO-AND-SO!

HATE TO THINK WHAT THAT SAYS ABOUT ME.





WE RESPECTFULLY SUGGEST THAT YOU DO NOT MISS OUR NEXT ISSUE...

"FRIENDS IN NEED!"



DC COMICS INC.
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Before we dive into the stack of mail on ACTION COMICS #668, we have a few missives concerning this year's way-cool ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #3 to mull over. Shall we?

Dear Superpeople:

I would like to voice my opinion of ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #3: good job! The story was great, it was written wonderfully and fabulously drawn. I have only one small problem with the book and it was probably more of an oversight, but due to my obsession with trying to create a greater continuity in the DC Universe, I felt compelled to bring it to your attention. The mistake I am talking about is that on pages 40 and 41, Hawk and Dove appear in costume. This is virtually an impossibility because Hank and Dawn cannot transform unless there is a danger present (and Guy Gardner being in the room isn't enough of a danger). Now, unless they have a great change in their powers years in the future which will be explained in this year's annual, I believe an oversight was made.

Now that I've got your attention, I would also like to question/comment on other occurrences that happen on the same pages: Guy Gardner's "outburst." There is a great debate going on in my house between my mother and myself. First, I must tell you that she is an obsessive Gardner fanatic and I am an ardent Gardner hater. My mother feels that the use of Guy in the book was simply another attempt at "Guy-bashing" and completely unnecessary to the storyline. I beg to differ. I feel that Guy's reactions were true to himself and the actions taken against him were proper (he did try to assassinate a world leader and he did lose to Superman in a battle of wills). I also feel that the importance of this particular storyline came after Guy's "removal" from the planet, when Superman refused the power ring because it would give him too much power. I think this was to show that he isn't an absolutist. My mother feels that using Guy in this scenario is uncalled for and the "non-absolutist thing" could have been without Guy being "trashed." This is fine, but my explanation/defense was to ask why would the Guardians decide now that they want to give Superman a ring when Earth already had a Green Lantern? Furthermore, it was completely in Guy Gardner's nature to "act out" his emotions at the time. This was simply a characteristic, not an explanation for his actions.

Adriane Nash
Stamford, CT

Yeah, Guy's a hothead, pure and simple, and never seems to consider the ramifications of his actions until it's too late. We never intended to "bash" Guy, but since he has such a problem with any authority figure, we figured he would be the first person to be confrontational in this particular situation, although assassination is not so strong a word for exactly what he pulled.

As for the Hawk and Dove mix-up, you know by now that Hawk himself became the dreaded Monarch and that the ACTION COMICS ANNUAL timeline itself is now completely suspect—unless, of course, those two heroes pictured were the new Hawk & Dove, two heroes who can become H & D even when all is calm! As you can see, there's a lot in all the ARMAGEDDON Annals that is going to be open to interpretation and argument.

And speaking of arguments, it's nice to see that you and your mother actually talk to each other, Adriane! In this day and age, that warrants each of you the first Family Baldy!

Dear Mr. Carlin:

ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #3 raises some interesting points. Foremost of these is the concept of Superman becoming President. In recent issues of his many titles, the Man of Steel has stated that he can't identify himself with any one country on Earth. In other words, he considers himself a citizen of the world. So, why become President of the United States and seemingly contradict that? In my belief, the question is open to interpretation. It seems Roger Stern is implying that by becoming President, Superman is in the best possible position to unite Earth, thus keeping in tandem with Superman's ideals.

The ARMAGEDDON 2001 series has been very enjoyable. Through the series, we've been able to see tales that years ago would have been called "Imaginary Stories." I look forward to each installment.

So far, this installment was the best of the series, spotlighted by the Dave Gibbons cover. He draws far too few Super-portraits.

Tim Durbin
(address not provided)

We agree, Tim, and that's why Dave will be involved with Simon Bisley on an upcoming project featuring a very different Superman!

Dear Action Editor:

Two years ago I began reading comics (why are they still called "comics"?), as a means to escape the pain of my mother's death. I have just finished reading ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #3. What a wonderful vision—a balm for the soul. And that ending...Beautiful, just beautiful. If only...

Thank you so very much.

Jim Flynn Hunter
(address not provided)

And now, what we've all been waiting for, your thoughts on ACTION COMICS #668—"The Ghost of Luthor!"

Dear Super-Folk:

Re: ACTION COMICS #668

Let me see if I got this straight. An Elvis type reports sighting Lex Luthor, while on the "Renaldo" show? I guess that's possible. If anyone is with Luthor now, it's Elvis.

May they both rest in peace!

Harry Slomovits
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Metropolitans:

I hope this is as small as the ACTION COMICS logo is going to get, guys 'n' gals. I mean, I appreciate why you've altered the titles of the Superman family of comics, and as a comics shop manager I'm all in favor of it, but the old (and I mean OLD...you hear them bones creakin'?) fan in me would like to retain a recognizable ACTION COMICS logo, too. Without inflicting eyestrain in myself. Thanks.

Okay, I give in. I believe you. Finally. Honest. You've convinced me. Lex Luthor is dead. Deceased. Snuffed it. Bought the farm. Breathed his last. I'm sorry I ever doubted you. Forgive me. So how come he is causing more trouble for Metropolis and Superman dead than he ever did when alive? Actually, don't answer that. I know why. The man had such a pervasive grip on Metropolis, as a city and as the individuals that make up the city, that his death is rocking the big M to its foundations. And it makes for fascinating reading. Superman's confrontation with the strikers at the beginning of "The Ghost of Luthor" was nicely written by Roger Stern, a grim encounter starkly contrasted by the hilarious Beppo sequence (Oh, how I loved that! Many thanks, Roger). Again we had some excellent character scenes featuring Mayor Berkowitz, Cat Grant, Clark, Lois, and even Perry and Pa Kent. More I could not ask for, but got it in the form of heretofore missing details regarding the discovery of Luthor's crashed plane. That's what I call complete comics writing from the complete comics writer.

To complement all that, Bob McLeod and Denise Rodier pulled out all the stops and supplied some beautiful artwork. Approximately 22 pages of it, in fact. Oh well, I guess you'll just have to try harder next time, won't you?

Dale Coe
Cheshire, England

At last! We've finally put aside all doubts about the fact that Lex Sr. is dead! Break out the champagne!

Re: ACTION COMICS #668

Medical records can be faked!

Chris Connelly
Dearborn, MI

Sigh...

Dear Action Crew:

All right!!! I've waited long enough. When are you going to bring back Luthor? I mean, you just can't wipe out a comic book legend and expect everybody to just go along with it. Without bad there is no good, and without Luthor the legend of Superman can never be the same. I beg you, **YOU MUST BRING LUTHOR BACK**. After all, they never found the body.

Ocutan Gonzalez
Providence, RI

What do you think was in the body bag, chopped liver?

Dear Actioneers:

I saw Lex Luthor last week! He's hiding in the Marvel Universe to surprise Supes! And it might interest you to know that he's using the alias "Kingpin." Go for him, Clark!

Mark Phillips
Johnson City, TN

Dear Dan:

Boy! Action's Like, Dynamite! Yeah! Andy Neumeyer North Hollywood, CA
Nice try. But not nice enough.

O Fearless Editorial Staff of ACTION COMICS:

ACTION COMICS #868 was filler, pure and simple. The main focus of the story was the final, absolute, proof-positive verification of the death of Lex Luthor (unless, of course, it was a clone); all of which happened (off-page) between the last two pages of ACTION COMICS #680 (The Death of Luthor issue).

Then there were the numerous subplots: the relationship of Lois and Clark, ongoing economic problems of Metropolis, Jimmy Olsen's financial crisis, the vacation cruise, and the search for Luthor's heir—all of which are being moved along in what must be the Superman books' patented "just enough to keep you interested" method.

So what's my opinion on this piece of filler? I liked it. If this were printed in an issue of BATMAN, I'd be seriously hacked (although they really need to spend some time developing a supporting cast of characters). But the unusually large cast that appears in the Superman titles gives you the leeway to do something like this every few months.

There's one thing that I really wish I knew how ya'll did. How do you keep four separate titles reading as one book, while keeping each title's uniqueness? Recently, ACTION has focused most of its attention on the death of Luthor and its ramifications. AOS's current storyline is about the pursuit of the Parasite. MAN OF STEEL has been involved in the search for the psycho-terrorist Cerberus. And the focus of SUPERMAN is on the engagement of Clark and Lois. Then, at approximately three-month intervals, all of the Superman books converge to tell one heck of a crossover story (whose continuity rivals that of any comic book published in this or any other decade). All of this, plus the fact that your books do not have the numerous delays that seem to plague so many of the DC books (namely, the Mature Readers line and the ARMAGEDDON 2001 crossovers). I can't even begin to imagine the editorial nightmares that Mike Carlin must go through, not to mention the

writers and artists. Ya'll have been doing one hell of a job, and for one, hope you continue.

Richard Lester
Houma, LA

Well, we aren't sure how to take that one, Richard. We didn't quite think of ACTION COMICS #868 as filler, but a necessary aside to quell all the hard-heads out there who didn't think Lex died in that plane crash. But, if you liked it, you can call it whatever you want! By the way, we are hoping you sent copies of your letter to our bosses down the hall!

Dear Dan:

Okay, so I've trusted you people so far. Supergirl, Red Kryptonite, The Fortress of Solitude... don't worry, I said, they can handle it. And you did. Quite well, in fact; however, in ACTION #688 you seem very determined to convince us that Lex Luthor is dead. Well, he'd better not be! I've been enjoying the story so far—Luthor's disappearance, the resulting turmoil in Metropolis, the search for his heir—so I don't really mind how long you keep him "dead" in the short term. If he's really dead, though, you have wasted one of the most fascinating characters in the Superman mythos. Luthor is everything Superman isn't: wedded to power, emotional intimidation and shadowy manipulation, he is the harsh urban opposite to Clark's farmboy simplicity. Meeting his heir might be interesting, but you can't replace the real Luthor. Besides, I'm sure Lex could have faked the DNA on his "remains" if he'd wanted to go into hiding (So there!).

Anyway, I know Luthor's still alive. I saw him the other day down in Fremantle, busking with a guitar. He did a hot version of "Mister Tambourine Man" and was raking in the loose change. After he'd finished, I told him about your ersatz Baldy Awards. Boy, was he angry! He almost flipped his...uh...never mind...

Tim Richards
South Perth, Australia

In light of this issue's last page, Tim, we're inclined to believe part of your story—you didn't mention whether this Luthor fella had a beard, and don't be so sure that was a wig on top o' his noggin'. But if it was old Lex Sr., we're sure he'd find Baldy Awards quite flattering...Tell ya what, if you see him again, show him the Baldy Award we're sending you. We're sure he'll love it! Hmmm. Now that we think about it, since we covered two books this month, it's only fair that we give out another Baldy! All totalled, that makes it three Baldies in one letter column!! A new world record!

Hey, Dan:

Y'know, prior to ACTION COMICS #688 I never really noticed how good Rodier's inks are. His brand of embellishment is a huge asset to the title and he manages to round off McLeod's harder artistic edges quite well. The progression of the story seems much more fluid, less convoluted, thanks to the smoother style of visuals. I just hope he sticks around for a while.

Elvis Orten
Dawson Springs, KY

Sneaky, sneaky Elvis! We were expecting serious disbelief about our proof of Lex's death, and you catch us off guard by (deservedly) praising Denis's inks! C'mon, pick a fight, we're disappointed!

—Dan Thorstland
Put Up Your Dukes, Bud!

IN ONE WEEK: in SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #7—As always, just when things seem to be getting better, everything goes wrong! The Daily Planet strike is almost over, but that doesn't mean that life will get any easier for Clark and Lois. Jealousy, bitterness on the part of his co-workers, and a city left in turmoil by his absence are weighing heavily on Superman. And as we said before, everything goes wrong when Cerberus sets its sights on its next "recruit"—Lois Lane! Don't miss "Stormy Weather," by Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove, and Dennis Janke!

IN TWO WEEKS: Special guest star Aquaman gets needed help in the current Atlantis/OmniLand war raging in the pages of his new monthly title! Yep, the Man of Steel goes aquatic in SUPERMAN #63, and finds the flames of old romances burn hot even underwater! Who is this mystery woman fighting bravely alongside the King of Atlantis? Look to Dan Jurgens and Brett Breeding for the answers!

IN THREE WEEKS: With Mannheim locked up tight in Metropolis Penitentiary the world is safe, but is Manny safe from the world? Not likely, 'cause when the gears of PURGE start grinding, even the Man of Steel could get ground up if he gets between it and its target! PLUS: Jimmy Olsen's living arrangement goes straight to the dogs! Join Jerry Ordway, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood for ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #486, and be sure to bring a leash!

NEXT MONTH: in ACTION COMICS #673, Jimmy Olsen finds himself in a position that few people would envy—which we can only describe as: LIFE WITH BIBBO! No, it's not the latest fall sitcom, but the last hope of a homeless Jimmy! C'mon, admit it, you've always wanted to know more about the big guy's home life...here's your chance! And just in case you wondered about young Lex's familiar smoking habits, be here next issue for more info on the most talked about man in Metropolis! The gossip is brought to us by Roger Stern, Bob McLeod, and Denise Rodier.

This issue's zippy cover was laid out by Dan Jurgens and finished by Bob McLeod! Don't you just love speed-lines!



“...AND SCANNING FOR ALL!”

BeastCharming:
Not quite Big Blue,
but he's halfway there!

